A version of the above amendments with markings showing the changes immediately follows the signature block of this paper.

REMARKS

Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested. Moreover, the applicants have reviewed the First Office Action of April 10, 2001, and submit that this paper is responsive to all points raised therein.

Initially, the title was objected to. The applicants have changed the title of the invention to be more descriptive thereof, in accordance with the Examiner's request. The new title appears above. Accordingly, it is respectfully asserted that the objection has been cured.

Claims 1 and 4 were objected to based on informalities. With respect to claim 1, this claim has been amended, such that the objection is now moot. With respect to claim 4, applicants respectfully assert that the claim language is proper and the proposed amendment is not necessary. Accordingly, it is respectfully asserted that claims 1 and 4 are proper.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Shurman, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,007,234) et al. (Shurman).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite a cutting system of blade assemblies with individually operable motors. Each motor of each blade assembly is independently operable with respect to each other motor of the other blade assemblies within the cutting system. As a result of this structure, every individually operable motor operates with complete independence from every other motor, whereby, for example, one motor improperly functioning or not functioning at all will not cause malfunctioning of the cutting system.

Shurman is directed to a lawn mower with individually operable motors for cutting blades, these motors each connected to wheel driving motors. All of the individually operable cutting motors operate together, and are dependent on each other, as they form a guidance system for the lawn mower based on power consumption of cutting blade motors.

Shurman is in contrast to the claimed invention, since the individually operable motors depend on each other for proper operation of the guidance system. For example, should one cutting blade motor malfunction or fail, the entire guidance system will not operate properly.

Based on the above, Shurman fails to show a combination including individually operable cutting blade motors that operate independently of each other with respect to the system. Accordingly, Shurman can not anticipate claim 1 under 35 USC 102(b).

Since claim 1 is not anticipated by Shurman under 35 USC 102(b), claims 2-5, dependent thereon, are also not anticipated by Shurman for the same reasons. These claims further distinguish the invention from the cited art.

Claims 6-11 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Shurman in view of Dewey (U.S. Patent No. 5,404,697).

Claim 6, as amended, is directed to a lawnmower blade assembly including a motor in communication with a rotatable stub and a receiver, coupled to a blade. The receiver receives and retains the stub in a releasable engagement. The motor, stub, blade and receiver are configured to be in alignment such that the blade is balanced upon rotation.

Shurman discloses lightweight plastic blades that are mounted, by what is believed to be conventional fixed mounting means, such as screws or bolts, to output shafts of motors. These mountings are fixed and thus, there is not any releasable engagement of the blade with respect to the output shaft. This reference is silent as to blade components being balanced upon rotation.

Dewey is directed to a rotatable machinery system including a cutting blade 19, whose portions are bolted to a crossbar 18. The crossbar is mounted to a drive shaft 14 by a bolt 20. It is respectfully asserted that this bolt forms a fixed attachment and, thus there is not a releasable engagement between the crossbar 18 and the drive shaft 14. This reference is silent as to the crossbar and cutting blades being balanced upon rotation.

Based on the discussions above, any combination of Shurman and Dewey would remain structurally deficient, as these references fail to teach the recited releasable engagement components as well as fail to show structure for providing

balance to the blades upon rotation. Accordingly, claim 6 is non-obvious under 35 USC 103(a) in view of the cited art.

Since claim 6 is non-obvious under 35 USC 103(a) in view of the cited art, claims 7 and 8, dependent thereon, are also allowable over this cited art for the same reasons. These claims further distinguish the invention from the cited art.

Claim 9, as amended, is directed to a blade assembly including a motor in communication with a rotatable stub and a blade coupled to a receiver, the receiver including at least a plurality of flexible members that can be moved outward, allowing for disengagement of the blade from the motor.

Shurman and Dewey have been discussed above, those discussions are applicable here,

It is respectfully asserted that neither of these references disclose any structure of flexible members for releasing any blade engagement, and thus, this combination falls short of the claimed invention. Accordingly, claim 9 is non-obvious under 35 USC 103(a) in view of the cited art.

Since claim 9 is non-obvious under 35 USC 103(a) in view of the cited art, claims 10 and 11, dependent thereon, are also allowable over this cited art for the same reasons. These claims further distinguish the invention from the cited art.

Additionally, claim 10 has been amended so as to be consistent with claim 9, from which it depends.

Finally, the citations of Burch (U.S. Patent No. 6,164,049), Ku (U.S. Patent No. 5,572,856), Kallevig, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,638,668), Bonains, Jr. (U.S. Patent No. 4,696,153), James (U.S. Patent No. 4,308,713), and Fleigle (U.S. Patent No. 4,031,696), are noted to complete the record.

Should the Examiner have any question or comment as to the form, content or entry of this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below. Similarly, if there are any further issues yet to be resolved to advance the prosecution of this application to issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned counsel.

Allowance of all pending claims, 1-11, is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Peless, et al.,

By their Attorneys,

WOOD HERRON & EVANS

Date: 26 JUNE 2001

by _____

Name Scott A. Stinebruner

Reg. No. 38,323

WOOD, HERRON & EVANS
2700 Carew Tower
441 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202
Tel: (513) 241-2324
Fax: (513) 421-7269

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1, 6, 9 and 10 have been amended as below.

1. (Once Amended). A lawnmower comprising:

a cutting system comprising, a plurality of blade assemblies, each of said blade assemblies comprising:

a blade, and an individually operable [a] motor for rotating said blade [of each blade assembly], and

each motor of [in] each of said plurality of blade assemblies being independently operable with respect to each other motor in said plurality of blade assemblies within said cutting system.

6. (Once Amended). A lawnmower blade assembly comprising:

a motor in communication with a rotatable stub;

a blade [including a cutting blade portion coupled to];

a receiver, said receiver coupled to said blade and including members for receiving said stub and retaining said stub in said receiver in a releasable engagement,

said motor, stub, [cutting] blade [portion] and receiver are configured to be in coaxial alignment, such that said blade is balanced upon [cutting] rotation.

9. (Once Amended). A blade assembly comprising:

a motor in communication with a rotatable stub; and

a blade [including a cutting blade portion] coupled to a receiver, said receiver including a receiver member and at least a plurality of flexible members in communication with said receiver member, said flexible members for moving between outward and inward portions for engaging and retaining said stub in said receiver member in a releasable engagement, said flexible members including ends and configured such that pressure on said ends moves said

flexible members outward, allowing for at least the disengagement of said blade from said motor.

10. (Once Amended). The blade assembly of claim 9, wherein said motor, stub, [cutting] blade [portion] and receiver are configured to be in coaxial alignment, such that said blade is balanced upon [cutting] rotation.